



## HOW TO KILL A LANGUAGE: PLANNING, DIGLOSSIA, BI-NORMATIVISM, THE INTERNET AND GALICIAN

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### Abstract:

Galician, one of Spain's minority languages has existed for as long as Spanish, at least. Galician-Portuguese was a completely formed language with broadly homogenous written and spoken norms until two slightly different branches gradually emerged: Galician and Portuguese, starting in the thirteenth century. While Portuguese evolved and became one of today's languages spoken across the world, Galician was confined and relegated to a regional vernacular, spoken in the province of Galicia and fringes of Asturias, in the Northwesternmost corner of Spain, bordering with Portugal. From the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, Galician ceased to exist in the written form and when it reappeared, it had adopted the Spanish norms. It was only in the 1980's modern Spain and its accession to the EEC (now EU), that Galician finally (re)gained the status of official minority language in coexistence with the national language, Spanish or Castilian. Yet, whilst enjoying the official status protection from the Spanish State and fostered by the Council of Europe in terms of corpus and policy planning, education, usage in the press, media all aimed at revitalisation, Galician has not only been losing status and being eroded in an ever shifting diglossia relationship with Spanish, but also lost L1 speakers in the past forty years, and younger generations are more and more likely to either speak Galician as L2 or worse, chose not to speak it at all. This situation presents a contradiction and is the cause of conflict between different factions of Galician speakers, the Galegofalantes. Why and how can it be that a language which was repressed for over four hundred years, starts declining precisely after it was given official support? What factors played or are still at play in the steady decline and erosion of Galician? A study into historical, social, economic, cultural, regional, and international factors, events and particularly politically motivated Language Planning Policies can partly explain the precariousness of the Galician language. The last forty years and particularly the new Millenium and the Internet, brought in fast-paced global changes with significant technological advances often requiring adaptation, and sometimes disintegration of traditional socio-cultural communities. The timing was unfavourable towards Galician,

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aided by consistent nationalist glottopolitics, the planned syntactic corpus fostered by the successive regional governments and most local authorities, led to further deterioration and stagnation of Galician whilst galvanising further lexical and semantic influx of Spanish into the Galician language. Access to education, libraries, study materials, publications, research tools on the Internet is often available in Spanish only. Higher education and academia are dominated by Spanish, as are public services, institutions, the judicial system, mass-media and communication at all levels in everyday life. Some Galicians are happy with the pro-Spanish language norm also known as Isolationism, seemingly oblivious of the language-shift and replacement even in remote, rural societies. Others demand a Galician spelling much closer to Portuguese, her natural sibling and see the official re-unification, or Reintegrationism, with the Lusophone world as the only way to save Galician from an impending death. With deep-rooted divisions and conflicts, a compromise between Isolationists and Reintegrationists seems unlikely, except if there is markedly political change and with that a reversed language shift will take place.

**Keywords:** minoritized languages, European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Portuguese dialects, language planning and policy, diglossia, glottopolitics, linguistic corpora, Galician, language death

## 1. Introduction

The recognition of the Galician language (Galego) as official regional language, together with Spanish in the Autonomous Community of Galicia (Spanish Constitution, 1981), and further ratification by Spain of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 2001 (Council of Europe, ECRML, 2019, p.30), gave legal protection and enabled promotion of the use of Galician at all levels of education, in the media and public services. The number of Galician speakers, however, has been declining for the past forty years (Instituto Galego de Estatística, IGE 2014) with no indication for a change of course.

## 2. Purpose

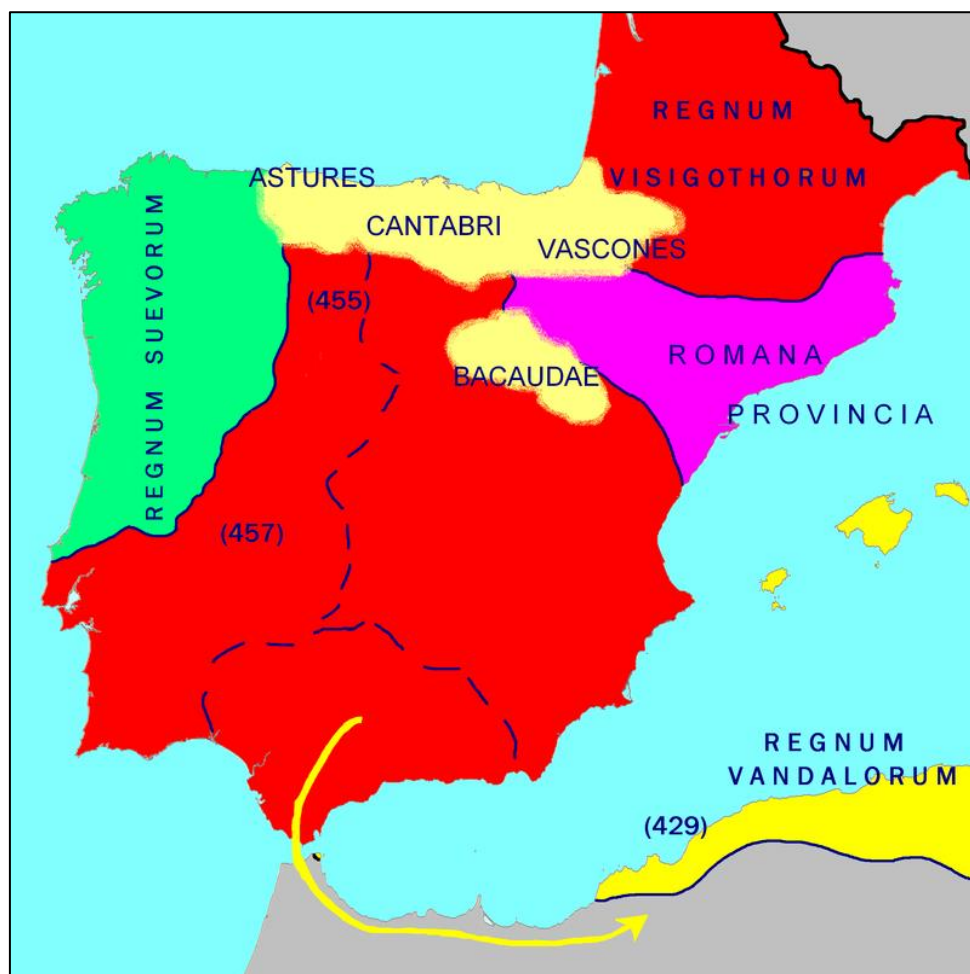
The study focuses and aims at explaining the dichotomy between officialisation and accelerated decline of the Galician language since the post-Franco era (Skobel, 2010, p.21) and 2021, by analysing contributing factors such as historical, political, sociolinguistic, historiographic, educational policies, internal tensions, and fast socio-economic and technological changes.

### 2.1 Historical timeline

The territory in which the Galician-Portuguese Romance variant was formed, corresponds to the Roman province of Gallaecia, consisting of former Roman ‘conventus’ areas in the third century AD, such as conventus Bracarensis, Cluniensis, Lucensis, Asturicensis, created to administer an indigenous ethnic base that already had a relative cultural unity (Baldinger 1963).

Its peripheral situation, at the most western end of the known world, at *Finis-Terrae* (the end of the Earth), allowed it to remain linguistically distant from the innovations that emanated from Rome (Teysser 1989, Monteagudo 1999, Condé 2005, Lagares and Monteagudo, 2021).

This new language is believed to have formed between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries mainly from a Vulgar Latin variant spoken in the then Suebian Kingdom of Gallæcia (with Bracara as capital), later taken over by the Visigoths, comprising present-day's northern half of Portugal, Galicia, and western parts of Asturias and Leon (López Quiroga, 2018).



**Figure 1:** Suebian Kingdom in 476 AD.  
(Adapted from Banza & Gonçalves, 2018)

This neo-Latin regional language kept an older autochthonous Celtic substratum (Martins Esteves, 1997) from Gallaecian-Lusitanian and some Germanic lexicon added subsequently. The first records are written in cursive Gothic, a mixture of Latin and early Galician-Portuguese dating to 882 AD. (Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, 1867-1873). The oldest Galician-Portuguese document, although undated, is placed ca. 1173 AD (Souto, 2003, Pp. 25-27) believed to have been written by a scribe identified in documents dated April 1175 AD.

The Kingdom of Leon and the newly formed County of Portvgaliae (both part of ancient Gallaecia-Lusitania) started diverging politically in 868 AD and culminated in 1143 with a Papal decree declaring Portugal a sovereign Nation.

By 1249, the Portuguese borders to the south were established and remained almost unchanged ever since.



**Figure 2:** “Notícias de Fiadores” (Debt notices of Pelagio Romeu), oldest known dated Galician-Portuguese document from São Cristóvão’s Monastery, Rio Tinto. April 1175 AD.

*Images of the History of the Portuguese Language. Lisbon: Instituto Camões, p. 16-17.)*

The political separation between Galicia and Portugal in the early Middle-Ages did not alter the continuum evolution of the language, and in fact Galician-Portuguese became associated with the troubadours in the different courts of Iberia.

Contemporary to the French-Provençal, Galician troubadours like Martim Codax (Littera-FCSH, Medieval Galician-Portuguese songs, Martim Codax) composed circa 1230 AD songs such as ‘Ondas do Mar de Vigo’, that still generate linguistic interest and interpretative debate among scholars today (Ferreira, 2018):





**Figure 3:** “Ondas do mar de Vigo” (“Waves of the Vigo Bay”,  
Vindel Parchment copy, Cunha, 1956)

Writings from different troubadours in that formative period, denote the absence of a totally uniform spelling system which also led to different interpretations of their works in time, as in the excerpt by Paay Gomez Charinho (below), where on the one hand there is autonomous syllable usage of the adverb ‘u’ (lat. *unde*= ‘where’) and on the other, the process of syllable loss/agglutination in Galician-Portuguese (Gal-Por) and the nasalisation of vowels, further distancing Galician-Portuguese from Latin can be identified:

en atal terra u nunca prazer *in such a land where pleasure*  
veja, nen cante, nen possa riir. *I shall never witness, nor sing nor be able to laugh*  
poys que farey ou que será de min, *what shall I do or become*  
quand' en terra u vós fordes non for? *when you reach a land, I cannot go to*

porque moyro – u mentira non á – *for I shall die – no lie in that-*  
por tal molher que quen-na vir dirá *for such a woman anyone who sees her will say.*  
que moyro ben morrer por tal senhor. *that I die a good death for such a noble.*

non sey, amiga; el cada u é *I do not know, my friend; (how) each of us is*  
Aprende novas con que morr'assi. *(when we) learn news and die thus.*

Galician-Portuguese	Present Galician	Portuguese	Etymology
*riir (to laugh)	rir (to laugh)	rir (to laugh)	from Lat. <i>Ridēre</i> (Digalego.xunta.gal, online, 2021)
*non, nom (no)	non (no)	não (/nãw/)	from Lat. <i>Non</i> (dicionario.Priberam.org, online, 2021 & Digalego.xunta.gal)
*molher (woman)	muller (woman)	mulher (woman)	from Lat. <i>mulīere</i> (Priberam, online & Digalego.xunta.gal).
*senhor (gentleman)	señor (gentleman)	senhor (gentleman, Lord)	from Lat. <i>seniōre(ris)</i> (Priberam, online & Digalego.xunta.gal).

\*\* The palatalised consonant sounds /ɲ/ and /ɲ/, written with the digraphs **lh** and **nh**, (Bagno, 2007) are believed to have been introduced in Galician-Portuguese at the same time as the Troubadour lyricism, influenced by the Provençal spelling (Lapa, 1929).

As the Kingdom of Leon merged with the Kingdom of Castile, the sphere of influence shifted southeast, away from Galicia between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The language of the Castilians, spread from Toledo as the Christian Kingdoms pushed south and southeast against the Moors. The elevation of Castilian into ‘Spanish’ (Del Valle, 2013) in the thirteenth century as the language of Hispania, consolidated bilingualism and diglossia between Spanish and regional vernacular languages and dialects in Spain (Ferguson, 1959).

Spain itself, would only become a united nation in 1491, when the ‘Catholic Monarchs’ Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand I of Aragon (Aram, 2006) finally conquered the Emirate of Granada from the Muslims (Peinado, 2011).

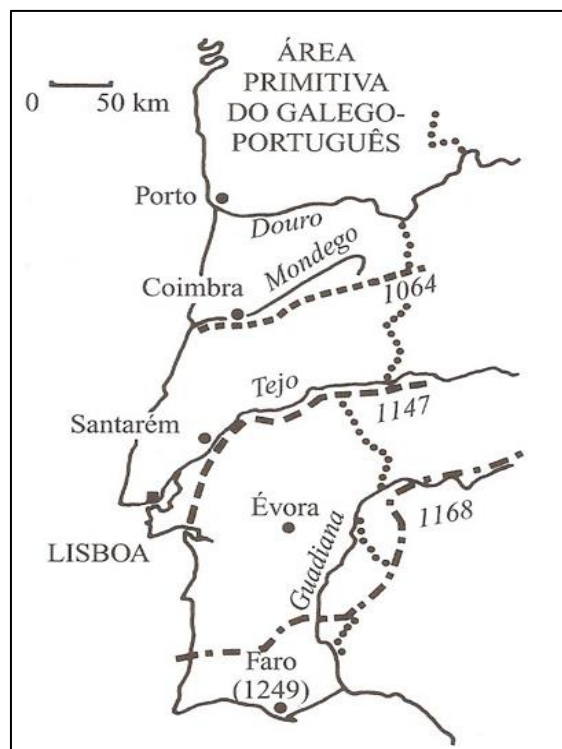
It was also from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards that Galician-Portuguese started separating – Galician entered an exodiglossic relationship with Castilian (Monteagudo and Lagares, 2017), gradually lost phonetic nasalised vowels as shown on the table below, absorbed Spanish consonant features such as the /θ/ phoneme known as ‘seseo’ by which process the previously different sounds corresponding to the old Gothic double ‘s’ spelled *ç*, *c*, *z* or *s*, in some cases like patronymic surname endings, all became one phoneme ‘th’ spelled ‘z’ or ‘c’ (when placed between two vowels), and an increased number of Spanish lexicon (Alonso, 1951):

**Table 1:** Divergent spelling between Galician-Portuguese and Castilian-Spanish/Hispanised Galician

Galician-Portuguese	Castilian and Galician (post-seseo)	English
Martins (surname)	Martinez (surname)	Martin(s) (surname)
Provençal	Provenzal	Provençal
Processo	Proceso	Process

Portuguese on the other hand, received substantial lexical and phonetic French and Provençal influence during the 13<sup>th</sup> and mid-14<sup>th</sup> centuries and entered a cycle of expansion starting with the maritime discoveries in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century.

This period marked the separation of Galician-Portuguese (Banza and Gonçalves, 2018) and the cessation of Galician in the written form between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.



**Figure 4:** Map of original Galician-Portuguese territorial limits and end of the Reconquista timeline. (Adaption of Teyssier, P. 'Historia da Lingua Portuguesa')  
[https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/158086/mod\\_resource/content/1/TEYSSIER %20HistoriaDaLinguaPortuguesa.pdf](https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/158086/mod_resource/content/1/TEYSSIER_%20HistoriaDaLinguaPortuguesa.pdf)

By as early as 1606 in his 'Origem da Língua Portuguesa', historian Duarte De Leão; already distinguished the elegance of Portuguese compared to Galician, explaining the contrast as due to: "*haver reis e corte, que é a oficina onde os vocábulos se forjam e pulem e donde manam para os outros homens*". (Leão 1983:220).

*"(Portugal) to have kings and court, which is the workshop where words are forged and spring out and where they flow into other men".*

This separation process is exacerbated by a simultaneous language-conflict in Galicia caused by the imposition of Castilian, the State's official language which eventually becomes 'Spanish'. (Mariño 1998 / Monteagudo 1999).

## 2.2 Rexurdimento

Following the end of the Napoleonic conflicts in 1810, a period of relative freedom and progress paved the way to a literary revival movement of the Galician language, culture, history known as Rexurdimento (resurgence) which took place in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Poets such as Rosalía de Castro with her folkloric texts ‘Cantares Gallegos’ in 1863, and others like Manuel Curros, Eduardo Pondal and Manuel Murguía in the 1880’s, actively engaged in reviving the Galician identity and voiced language rights in Galicia (loia.org, Consello da Cultura Galega na rede).

De Castro’s texts first published in the journal ‘Follas Novas’, were written in Galician but using mostly the Spanish language spelling (De Castro, 1880), the only grammatical system she (and everyone else) was educated in:

‘Cando penso que te fuches,	‘when I think that you are gone,
Negra sombra que m’asombras	dark shadow haunting me
Ô pé dos meus cabezales	by my pillows
Tornas facéndome mofa.’	You come to mock me again.’

Similarly, to other Western European nations, the prevailing ideology and language planning in Spain, became focused on monolingualism. Under the hegemony of one stronger language, Castilian in this case; smaller sociodialectal variants were not part of the national discourse (Blackledge, 2007).

There was no corpus planning for Galician at the time when the Resurgence occurred, no literacy instruction (Liddicoat, 2007) when De Castro published “Cantares Galegos”, as described by Martins Esteves:

*“Se há um programa é este: o da reivindicação dessa língua familiar e cultura herdada em farrapos, aprendida sem mais escola que a das aldeias e sem gramática de nenhuma classe, que aspira por próprio esforço e constância, em construção permanente desde aquela, a levar o nome de Galiza ao lugar onde lhe corresponde entre as nações da Terra.”*

*“If there is a plan, this is it: that of claiming back the home-language and culture, inherited in rags, learned from no schooling other than that of villages and no grammar, craving, fuelled by self-determination and constancy, in permanent reconstruction thereof; to bring the name of Galicia to her rightful place amongst the Earth’s Nations.”*

Galician became synonymous with rural, uneducated, and lower social classes who spoke a regional dialect; frowned upon in urban centres and higher or better-off social strata.

It is therefore not surprising that when the Rexurdimento occurred, writers no longer used a spelling different to Spanish as Galician over the centuries was only transmitted as a spoken vernacular, fragmented in dialectal variants across the regions of the old geographical Kingdom of Leon.

The geography over the centuries, also contributed toward the peripheral status of Galicia and the Galicians within Spain: a mountainous, cold, isolated, small, mostly agricultural and fishing region, poor in natural resources. Galicia became a land of emigrants. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, substantial numbers of Galicians emigrated to the



Americas via Portugal (Rodrigues, 2012), many illiterate or semi-illiterate in the search for better economic conditions.

### 2.3 Glottopolitics, Nationalism, Language Policy Planning (LPP)

Historically in the case of Spain, the concept of nation has encompassed centralised administrative, cultural, religious, military, political and ideological exercise from Madrid with her language as the only conveyer code to the Hispanic world. Castilian became the language of Spain, anchored in all regions and her colonial empire, as described by Blommaert and Heller (2010) “*in the monoglossic nationalism of the nation-state alongside those emo-linguistic ideologies*” (Morgenthaler García and Amorós-Negre, 2019).

Marcellesi postulates, ‘*les diverses approches qu’une société a de l’action sur le langage, qu’elle en soit ou non consciente: [...] Glottopolitique est nécessaire pour englober tous les faits de langage où l’action de la société revêt la forme du politique*’ (Marcellesi, 1986) glottopolitics encompasses all the actions of a society on language reflecting political purposes.

The prevailing Spanish discourse (as in numerous other countries in the Western world) was one where any divergence from the ‘traditional’ concept of one nation(-state), one language, one people, be those ideological or linguistic, were perceived as potential threat to the homogeneity of society as a unit (Hobsbawm, 1998). Monolingualism and LPP (Language Planning and Policy) approaches differ within the Western world.

In neighbouring France (illustrating one example among several other European nations) for instance, the state adopted a centralised LPP relatively late compared to Spain yet consistently more pugnaciously. Starting with the replacement of Latin by French (Ordonnance de Villers Cotterêts, 1593), the principal minister to Louis XIII, Cardinal Richelieu, established the Académie Française in 1635 and by standardising the Île-de-France dialect, as *langue française* all other language varieties in France were invalidated.

This monolingualistic policy has not changed exceedingly over several centuries, the Francophonie league promoted the influence of French as a global language and to this day, the Académie (Carrère d’Encausse, 2008) defends article 2 of the French Constitution: «*La langue de la République est le français*» (*The language of the (French) Republic is French*). Furthermore, and despite having signed the European Charter of Minority Languages in 1999, France has neither ratified nor implemented it to this day. Concerns over the increased proliferation of English terms in French since the 1980’s culminated in the Toulon Law (French Republic, 1994), to defend the integrity and purity of the French language.

This concern continues even during the COVID-19 pandemic. New Anglicisms such as ‘cluster, coping, tracking’ are generating controversy and debate in the French society (Ministère de la Culture, 2020).

Galician and other minority languages in Spain (Basque, Catalan, Asturian), although at different points in history, suffered a similar fate to minority languages in France.

As embodiment of a different language, identity and culture in a Spanish region, Galician was consigned to an unofficial status, with ever reduced influence or power,

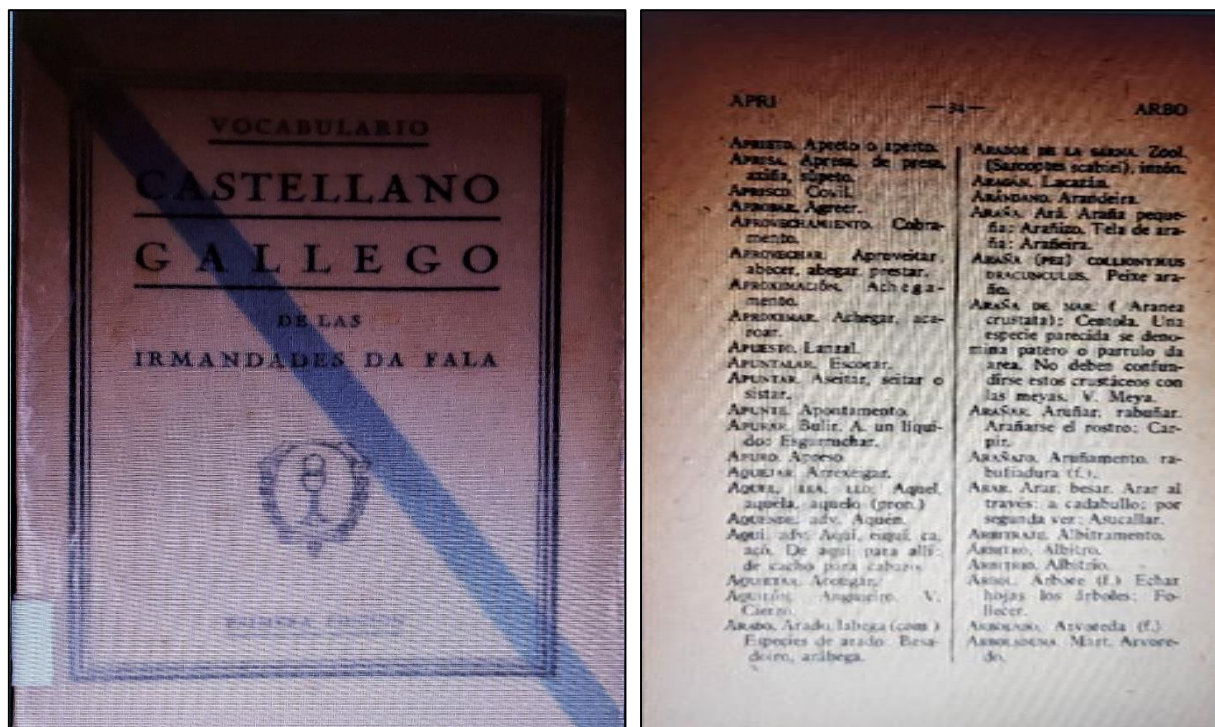
lack of standardisation or renewal, corpus planning or transmission, only being used as family or local vernacular, orally transferred from generation to generation in Galicia.

It is safe to say that since the 15th century and at least until 1981, Galician was actively planned to confer absolute dominance of Spanish (Wardhaugh and Fuller, 2014).

Conversely in the US for instance with regards to Spanish speakers, particularly since the 1980's there have been attempts to implement 'English Only' spoken in the workplace, although there isn't a law stipulating that English is the (only) official language in America.

## 2.4 Diglossia, sociolinguistic apartheid, and self-hate syndrome

After the Rexurdimento period and during the 1930's Second Republic in Spain, where Galician was briefly allowed to co-exist with Spanish, Galicia was engulfed by "a strongly centralist and patriotic military-type dictatorship established with Francisco Franco" at the helm (Del Valle, 2000, p. 109).



**Figure 5:** First edition inset and page 34 image of 'Vocabulario Castellano-Gallego de las Irmandades da Fala', 1933 adaptation from Biblioteca Galiciana:

<http://biblioteca.galiciana.gal/en/consulta/registro.do?id=447813>

With the start of the Spanish Civil War, extreme violence broke out in Galicia (Cordis, 2016) in 1936, paradoxically the same year when the Partido Galeguista (Galician Nationalist Party) had the *Cortes Generales* approve legislation ceding Galician and Spanish co-official language status and the schooling of both languages.

- Between 1917 and until the Civil War outbreak, Galician nationalistic writers and scholars attempted to overcome the dialectal variants or inter-dialects of Galician replacing them by superdialects aspiring to a unifying and unified language norm.

- The 'Irmandade da Fala' founded in 1917, was the first Galician language institution focused on the recovery and purification of Galician, clearing it of Hispanisms (Castilianisms) and working toward a more accurate, standardised corpus namely with the 'Gramática do Idioma galego' and the first Spanish-Galician dictionary 'Vocabulario Castellano-Gallego de las Irmandades da Fala'.

Between 1939 and 1975, Franco's dictatorship enforced the use of Castilian Spanish as the only and obligatory language for administration, education and media characterised by repression, violence, discrimination and contempt towards the Galician, Basque, Catalan language, and cultural identity. During this era, the use of Galician (and other minority languages) was mostly restricted to domestic contexts and informal communication. After Franco's death in 1975, democracy returned to Spain and the Spanish Constitution was written in 1978.

The relationship between Galician and Spanish can be diagnosed by this formulation: What actors attempt to influence what behaviours of which people for what for what ends under what conditions by what by what means through what decision-making process with what effect? (Cooper, 1989)

The Spanish state enforced a different language upon the speakers of Galician by creating a situation of diglossia where the local language was subjugated and ceased to exist in the written form, some of its phonetics, lexicon, syntax, and semantics were altered and replaced, stopped being taught to young generations, lost socioeconomic prestige under Castilian rule to become Hispanised and congruent with the nationalist monolingual norms.

The Francoist regime weakened and marginalised Galician further, and those who aspired to socioeconomic progression chose to speak Spanish and embrace the cultural Spanish currents as speaking, sounding or identifying as Galician was

*[...desprestigiado por pertencer a umha cultura sentida como rural e arcaica por boa parte dos grupos dominantes, e onde o idioma próprio é considerado veículo precário de cultura e negativo para o sucesso social e económico, próprio das classes populares e inapto para o progresso e a considerada alta cultura.]* (Torres Feijó, 2009).

*[...discredited for belonging to a culture felt as rural and archaic by most of the dominant groups, and where the native (Galician) language is considered a precarious vehicle of culture and hindrance for social and economic success, typical of the lower classes and unfit for progress and the perceived high (Spanish) culture.]*

This language policy bears asymmetric parallels with the South African Apartheid system in the linguistic and socio-educational and cultural senses. Afrikaans was widely referred to as 'Kombhuis Nederlands' (Kitchen Dutch), a language and culture frowned upon by the Anglophone settlers who migrated to South Africa during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Two languages and cultures living side by side in precarious coexistence known as 'language struggle', in constant tension, sometimes conflict and mutual prejudice;

English the language of the conquerors, Afrikaans the language of the conquered (Reagan, 1988). As the Afrikaner nationalist movement grew stronger and the National Party regime took the power in 1948, the dynamics between the two languages and factions of society was reversed. Afrikaans was the dominant White language and the educational programmes favoured Afrikaans over English schooling (Reagan, 1988).

Black populations were encouraged to access schooling in their respective native languages, with the Bantu Education Act of 1953, intended to 'divide and conquer' as means to perpetuating the ethnolinguistic division in South Africa (Reagan, 1988). When in 1974 Afrikaans became compulsory alongside English as medium of instruction in South African schools, black students began mobilising against learning and speaking the 'Apartheid language', culminating with the June 16th Soweto Youth Uprising in 1976 (SAHO, 2013).

Both the Afrikaans and Spanish nationalistic language policies placed one language above another (others), both were designed to enable the supremacy of one language and ideology over another (others), both imposed social, economic segregation, and both fuelled discrimination of one sociolinguistic group on another (others) as exposed by Del Valle (2000) on Galician and the Galicians "*(both) associated with ignorance, illiteracy and underdevelopment, a stigmatisation which prevails in the present*" (Nandi, 2017).

In 1978 the Spanish constitution recognised regional minorities in a state of 17 autonomous regions, Castilian continued as the official language of state whereby all Spaniards have the duty to know it and right to use it, and minority language-speakers, in Autonomous Communities, including Galicians have the right to know and use their regional language (BOE: Spanish Constitution, 1987).

Beyond dispute however, Spanish continued to be the only official language of the state. For instance, Galician politicians are free to use Galician in their regional Parliament but not in the Cortes Generales, the national assembly where only Spanish is allowed (Spanish Constitution).

Conversely, European deputies from Galicia such as Camilo Nogueira, Ana Miranda or José Posada speak Galician in their European Parliament sessions because linguistically, and outside of Spain; Galician and Portuguese are considered the same language with regional variations (AGLP, 2009).

Whilst the Spanish state proscribes the usage of autochthonous languages such as Galician at the highest levels of government, the European Union defends, promotes, and celebrates the multilingual heritage and equality among all languages within the European nations, (European Union, 2000) and prohibits any discrimination based on language. ELEN (European Language Equality Network) has presented 2 reports to the UN exposing systematic discrimination against Catalan, Galician, Basque and Asturian speakers in Spain (ELEN, 2019). Linguistic discrimination can be described as:

*"discriminación lingüística" [...como calquera actitude cara ás linguas ou variedades que se basee na idea de estas se poderen clasificar en tipos e de existiren diferenzas entre eses tipos "que pueden justificar la concepción de que unas son superiores a otras total o parcialmente"]* (Moreno, 2006).

*"[...any attitude towards languages or (linguistic) varieties based on the idea that those can be classified into types and there being differences between those types "which may justify the concept that some (languages or linguistic varieties) are totally or partially superior to others"]."*

Once users of a particular language accept this ideology and inherent prejudices which discriminate between inferior or superior languages, a mechanism of discrimination against the perceived 'inferior' language will ensue and may lead speakers of the lower language to abandon it in favour of the privileged one. Consequently, discrimination generated by prejudice can become self-discrimination and self-hatred (Freixeiro Mato, 2017).

Having been treated as speakers of a minority language in their own land for over five centuries, users of Galician particularly some diatopic varieties, are still victims of the prejudices and stereotypes accumulated over that long period of diglossia (Freixeiro Mato, 2016).

## **2.5 Educational system and multilingualism**

Within 20<sup>th</sup> century democratic Spain, Language Planning and Policy (LPP) in Galicia was based upon three legislative directives: Article 3 of the Spanish Constitution of 1978, Article 5 on Galicia Autonomous Community in 1981, and the LNL (Linguistic Normalisation Law) of 1983 designed to ensure balance in a bilingual society (BOE, LNL, 1983).

From inception however, the successive local governments failed to follow through with the adequate LNL implementation (Monteagudo (2012b, p. 26). An intermittent 'laissez-faire' attitude coupled with low-intensity language policy model focusing almost exclusively on the educational domain, has left Galician with reduced scope for revitalisation in other spheres of society and led to an endemic sociolinguistic crisis since 2009 (Nandi, 2017) to this day.

Equal practical implementation of Galician and Spanish, including in educational institutions; is laborious because there are no unified language contexts in Galicia where the two languages are equally distributed (Monteagudo, 2003).

Based on the number of speakers' ratio, one of the two voices has been chosen over the other. In urban centres, most children are educated and raised in Spanish, whereas in rural and smaller populations Galician is dominant. Thus, the status-quo perpetuates the Spanish dominance because conurbations, more affluent, and more educated segments of a population under 3 million (Eurostat, 2020), do not use Galician as first language.

Another aspect to emphasise is the sociolinguistic discourse among young people in Galicia, whereby language and identity or ethnolinguistic awareness, are not generally perceived as correlated (RAG, 2003). Yet in the same study by the Royal Academy of Galicia (RAG), upon further interviewing young participants respectively from rural areas and urban areas to describe 'Galicians', the sociolinguistic ambivalence is revealing:



Procedencia rural, lingua habitual galego	Procedencia urbana/viviron fóra de Galicia, lingua habitual castelán
<p><i>Arraigados á terra:</i> refírese a ter amor ó que é propio, á cultura...</p> <p><i>Abertos:</i> refírese a sociabilidade. A mesma entrevistada que sinala esta característica relativízaa por descoñecemento doutras culturas.</p> <p><i>Solidarios:</i> refírese a solidariedade inter e intra grupal. Esta característica relaciónase co modo de vida rural: axudas nas tarefas agrícolas...</p> <p><i>Traballadores:</i> indica «intereses na vida», certa ambición e afán de superación persoal.</p>	<p><i>Desconfiados:</i> asóciase con ser «cazurros», «cerrados», etc. Esta característica conduce a ó comportamentos pouco innovadores.</p> <p><i>Indirectos:</i> pode interpretarse como unha intencionalidade de ocultar algo, de enganar.</p> <p><i>Indecisos:</i> ausencia de interese para tomar decisións.</p> <p><i>Autocompasivos:</i> choróns, victimistas.</p> <p><i>Melosos:</i> asóciase á morriña, á melancolía, non a ser agarimosos. Probablemente saudade.</p> <p><i>Sentido do humor:</i> sentido do humor intelixente.</p> <p><i>Misteriosos:</i> característica baseada nunha percepción do folclore popular galego: lendas..., non nas relacións cotiás.</p>

**Figure 6:** Typical characteristics listed by participants between 18 and 24 years old, defining their concept of ‘Galicians’. One group educated and based in rural areas, speaking Galician at L1 (left column). Another group educated and based in urban centres/who lived outside of Galicia, and speaking Spanish as L1 (right column)

(Adaptation of RAG <http://publicacions.academia.gal/index.php/rag/catalog/view/169/170/576-1>, Table 19, Pp.85)

**Table 3:** Adaptation of RAG

<http://publicacions.academia.gal/index.php/rag/catalog/view/169/170/576-1>, Table 19, Pp.85

Rural origin, Galician L1 speaker	Urban origin/ Lived outside of Galicia, Spanish L1 speaker
<p><i>Rooted to the (home)land:</i> love authenticity, (local) culture...</p> <p><i>Open:</i> are sociably open. The same participant describes this openness as relative, due to lack of knowledge of other cultures.</p> <p><i>Supportive:</i> display solidarity within and outside own group. This relates to rural life: helping with farming chores...</p> <p><i>Hardworking:</i> indicating “expectations in life”, a strive and ambition towards personal betterment.</p>	<p><i>Suspicious:</i> associated with being reserved, keeping themselves to themselves, etc. Not receptive to innovation.</p> <p><i>Ambiguous:</i> can be interpreted as intentionally deceiving and cunning.</p> <p><i>Indecisive:</i> unwilling to make decisions.</p> <p><i>Self-complacent:</i> prone to self-pity and victimisation.</p> <p><i>Mellow:</i> associated with longing, melancholy, not affectionate. Word that the Portuguese and Germans respectively define by ‘Saudade’ and ‘Sehnsucht’.</p> <p><i>Mysterious:</i> a feature based on Galician folklore: legends... non applied on everyday interactions.</p>

Furthermore, with the Plurilingualism decree of Xunta de Galicia 2010 '*Decreto 79/2010, do 20 de maio, para o plurilingüismo no ensino non universitário de Galicia*', English has been added as third language within the Galician education curricula and, according to some segments of education professionals and population (AS-PG and CIG Ensino, 2010), is posing an additional challenge to the teaching and transmission of Galician in schools and higher education institutions even further: subjects such as sciences tend not to be taught in Galician at higher levels of education (COE, 2010).

This policy came as part of an EU-wide epistemological view and related policies towards achieving joint knowledge dissemination and cohesive instruments of communication inter member states (COE 2009, Kaplan 2008).

Under the 2010 decree, the Government implemented a Plurilingual language policy model in certain schools where 33% of teaching is conducted in Galician, 33% in Spanish and the remainder 33% in English.

Each (state) school's managing board can decide and apply for the Plurilingual model in their institution.

Private schools are allowed to choose their preferred language of instruction but must still offer Galician and Castilian as subjects in their curricula (Nandi, 2017).

The implementation of language policies in Galicia however, has been and continues to be, confronted with an ingrained Spanish monolingualistic ideology from the political classes and establishment,

*"Existe en Galicia unha ideoloxía proclive ao «monolingüismo en castelán», aínda que non se presente como tal e se agache baixo proclamas socialmente moito máis asumibles, como son a liberdade de opción lingüística e o rexeitamento a calquera medida orientada á revitalización social da lingua galega."* (Silva, Rodríguez, Vaquero, 2011).

*"There is an ideology in Galicia prone to "Spanish monolingualism", although it is not presented as such and hides under the pretext of much more socially acceptable proclamations, such as freedom of choice and rejection of any measure aimed at the social revitalization of the Galician language."*

And this discourse results in,

*"[...o resultado ao que leva este discurso non é moi diferente do do «monolingüismo en castelán», porque parte duns principios operativos moi semellantes – evitar o conflito e garantir a liberdade individual- que supón fatalmente o esmorecemento do idioma menos competitivo.]* (Silva, Rodríguez, Vaquero, 2011).

*"[...the result of this discourse differs little from that of "Spanish monolingualism", because it starts from highly similar operating principles – (under the pretence of) avoiding conflict and guaranteeing individual freedom - which fatally means the decline of the less competitive language (Galician).]"*

## 2.6 Isolationism, Reintegrationism and the Future

In 1970 the Real Academia Galega (RAG), the authority tasked with the standardisation of written Galician, issued the first official norms. The LNL (1983) is considered by some as the stepping-stone for the revival and reinstatement of Galego in all sectors of Galician society with appropriate corpus, status, prestige and language acquisition planning (Monteagudo, 2012a), being able to finally “*raise its former status from a low prestige language and end the discrimination towards its speakers, developed as a consequence of such status*” (Loureiro-Rodríguez, 2008, p. 67, on Nandi, 2017).

The process of attempted standardisation of a self-identified Galician published in 1982, ‘*Bases prá Unificación das Normas Lingüísticas*’ (Basis for the Unification of the Norms) was problematic from inception (Weinstein, 1980) because in trying to free from the influence of Castilian and Portuguese languages with long-established historical connections to Galician, the normative ideologies and opinions were conflictive even as RAG and ILG (Instituto da Lingua Galega / Institute of Galician Language, henceforth ILG) were formed.

One of the most influential modern Galician linguists and thinkers, also a founding member of RAG, was Ricardo Carvalho Calero (Rodríguez, 2000). Carvalho Calero totally opposed what he and many other scholars, intellectuals, education professionals and everyday Galicians, considered the pro-centralised, and pro-Hispanised language-prescription of Galician imposed by the ruling political elites and decision-makers.

*“Carvalho Calero foi fundamentalmente umha planificação de contrapoder, entendendo esta como a planificação alternativa cujo alvo imediato é a progressiva democratização da hegemónica ou oficial, enquanto nom se conseguiu umha Planificação Lingüística feita desde e para o galego.”* (Penabade Rei, 2011).

*“Carvalho Calero’s was fundamentally a counter-power (language) planification, understanding this as the alternative against (that) whose immediate aim is the progressive democratisation of the hegemonic (pro-Castilian) or official LPP, because a Linguistic Planning made **by** and **for** Galicians has not been achieved.*

Thus, two disagreeing main ideologies and written norms for Galician have been part of the Galician discourse since the late 1970’s and 80’s: Isolationism and Reintegrationism (Carballo Calero, 1979).

The so-called ‘Isolationism’ is the policy supporting the current written form of Galician, fostered by the local Xunta de Galicia government, defended by RAG, promoted by ILG and coincidentally Spanish nationalist politicians and people, whose political orientation and ideologies tend to be loyal to the Spanish state and the concept of a unified Nation.

From a linguistic and sociocultural perspective, Galician is a language, or for some a dialect, heavily influenced by Spanish over the past five centuries, and could not and cannot therefore, be revived on a purely historical, medieval tradition which became

redundant, and thus, unfit for contemporary applicability. If ever even contemplated, a language revival programme such as Hebrew (Molaie, 2018) was not considered viable by Galician authorities in the 1980's.

'Reintegrationism' on the other hand, represented namely by AGAL (Associaçom Galega da Língua), proposes a binormative policy with two written norms of Galician depending on personal preference of Galician speakers:

*"Galician could be written either in the current RAG norms or what they call the 'international Galician' or 'Português da Galiza' (Galego-Portuguese) rooted on a historical spelling system and syntax much closer to medieval Galician-Portuguese and modern Portuguese."* (AGAL, 2017)

The Reintegrationist model and ideology exemplify other binormative and practical 'Ausbau language' (Trudgill, 1992) cases in Europe such as Norway's 'Nynorsk and Bokmål' (Language Council of Norway-Språkrådet), the 'Lëtzebuergesch' Germanic variant of Luxembourg (Konstali, 2010) in relation to Hochdeutsch (High-German), or Flemish in relation to Dutch, Macedonian in relation to Bulgarian; are all different cases involving closely-related linguistic pairs whereby variants have been standardised (Mera Quintas, 2018) and continue evolving from (the perception of) 'dialect' to language status. Within the binormative discourse in Galicia, there are several options being debated in society:

*"Se, em relação à adjacente variedade lusitana do galego-português, a norma galega isolacionista se revela secessionista, a norma reintegracionista lusitana é subordinacionista, enquanto a norma galega reintegracionista é coordenacionista."* (Garrido, 2020)

*"If, in relation to the adjacent Lusitanian variety of Galician-Portuguese, the Galician isolationist norm proves to be secessionist, the Lusitanian reintegrationist norm is subordinationist, while the Galician reintegrationist norm is coordinationist".*

The so-called 'Coordinationist-Reintegrationism' appears the most conducive as it refutes the concept of Galician as a dialect (of Spanish) but a regional variant of Galician-Portuguese.

Their proposed corpus is essentially Portuguese with distinct Galician prosody, orthography, morphosyntax and lexical differences (Garrido, 2020). It is uncertain whether RAG and AGAL will reach any viable compromise concerning Galician's future developments.

Galicia has been an 'observer' of the CPLP Lusophone group of countries and applied for formal membership but in 2020, the Spanish state came up with a counteroffer (González Velasco, El Trapézio, 2020) where Spain (united) wishes to become an observing associated partner at the CPLP Lusophone world.

The Spanish State's approach to language continues to be one intrinsically linked to political agendas: language matters are political matters where the dominance of Castilian over regional languages continues to be implicitly '*sine qua non causation*'.

Since the accession of Spain and Portugal in the 1980's however, there have been numerous initiatives and EU-funded programmes of cooperation and regional development between Galicia and Northern Portugal apart from a renewal of shared close linguistic, ethno-cultural ties (Sampedro, 2012).

The 'Eixo-Atlântico' project officially launched in 1992, (Méndez, 2007) is a Euro-Region association consisting of 35 local authorities between Galicia and Northern Portugal, including the main urban centres such as Porto, Gaia, Braga, Santiago de Compostela, Vigo and Coruña; focused on joint infrastructure networks, sustainable development, biodiversity and environment protection, renewable energies, innovation (Digital Local Agenda) culture, territorial and social cohesion, modernisation of administration and public services, among others (Eixo Atlantico, 2021). Several high-speed train projects are being implemented to connect major cities in this region, with airports and maritime ports also being expanded:



Figure 7: Urban system of the Eixo-Atlântico (Atlantic Axis)

<https://www.eixoatlantico.com/images/en/triptico-ingles-ok-montado.pdf>

The current linguistic conflict in Galicia (Bobillo García et al., 98), according to some quarters has an added modern problem- regular speakers and younger generations



are using code-switching and diglossia more, contributing to an overall stagnation, erosion, usurpation, and semantic replacement of Galician by Spanish (Comissom Lingüística da Asociación Galega da Língua, 2012) as illustrated on the next table:

**Table 4:** Adaptation and translation of ‘Modelo Lexical Galego’ CL AGAL, 2012, Online dictionaries: Galician DIGALEGO <https://digalego.xunta.gal/>, Spanish RAE <https://dle.rae.es/>, Portuguese <https://www.infopedia.pt/> Consulted 29/05/21

‘Current’ Galician	Spanish	‘Reintegrationist’ Galician	Portuguese	Etymology
→ enfermar ‘to get sick’ <i>*semantic replacement</i>	enfermar ‘to get sick’	adoecer ‘to get sick’ →	adoecer ‘to get sick’	< lat. <i>ad+dolescere</i> , < lat. <i>infirmare</i>
→ contestar ‘to answer’ <i>*semantic replacement by reinforcement</i>	contestar ‘to answer’	responder ‘to answer’	responder ‘to answer’	< lat. <i>respondere</i> < lat. <i>contestari</i>
→ melocotón (pexego) ‘peach’ <i>*semantic replacement</i>	melocotón ‘peach’	pêssego, pexego, perxego ‘peach’	pêssego ‘peach’	< lat. <i>pêrsicu</i> < lat. <i>malum cotonium</i>
→ olor, (cheiro) ‘smell’, ‘bad smell’ <i>*lexical and semantic replacement</i>	olor ‘smell’	cheiro ‘smell’	cheiro ‘smell’	< lat. <i>fragro</i> < lat. <i>olore</i>
→ azeite, óleo ‘oil’ <i>*semantic replacement</i>	aceite ‘oil’	óleo ‘oil’	óleo ‘oil’	< lat. <i>olĕu</i> < <i>Hisp. arabic azzáyt</i>
→ almuerzo ‘breakfast’ <i>*semantic usurpation</i>	almuerzo ‘lunch’	desjejum ‘breakfast’	pequeno-almoço, desjejum ‘breakfast’	< lat. <i>admorsu</i> < lat. <i>des+jejunus</i> < lat. <i>admorsu</i>
→ ilusión ‘fantasy’ <i>*semantic usurpation</i>	ilusión ‘fantasy’	ilusom ‘illusion’ devaneio ‘fantasy’	ilusão ‘illusion’, devaneio ‘fantasy’	< lat. <i>illusiōnis</i> < lat. <i>de+vanu</i>
→ xoguete ‘toy’ <i>*semantic replacement</i>	juguete ‘toy’	brinquedo ‘toy’, joguete ‘toy’	brinquedo ‘toy’	<i>Uncertain origin*</i> <i>either &lt; lat. vinculum</i> <i>or &lt; germanic blikana/blink</i> < lat. <i>joco</i>
→ terreo, seara ‘crop/farming field’ <i>*lexical replacement</i>	tierra sembrada ‘crop field’	seara ‘crop field’	seara ‘crop field’	< <i>celtic senāra</i> < lat. <i>terra</i>
→ borracho, (bébedo) ‘drunk’	borracho ‘drunk’	bêbedo ‘drunk’	bêbedo ‘drunk’	< lat. <i>bibitus</i> < <i>Cat. morratxa</i> < <i>Hisp. arabic mīrāšša</i>

* <i>patrimonial voice replacement, Castilianism</i>		(replaceable Castilianism, added 18 <sup>th</sup> century)		
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## 2.7 Urban society, the Internet and Globalisation

Urban Galician society and younger generations, tend to associate Galician with the past, a language they recall from their grandparents but which their daily life and the wider Spanish reality, do not relate to (CL AGAL, 2009). Even for children who start their early education mainly in Galician, the likelihood that they end up with their higher education in Spanish is almost certain (Iglesias, 2020):



**Figure 8:** Published by Galiciaconfidencial.com, adapted from ‘Campaña da Mesa pola Normalización Lingüística sobre a suposta imposición da lingua galega’;  
<http://www.galiciaconfidencial.com/noticia/146930-lingua-xaque-ensino-crianzas-entran-falando-galego-acaban-falando-castelan-reves>

Factual evidence on the diglossia, which largely favours Spanish usage in detriment of Galician:

*"Is this the freedom of Galician?"*

*The "imposition of Galician":*

*Daily Galician printed newspapers: 0%*

*Insurance Policies in Galician: 1%*

*People aged 5 to 14 who cannot speak Galician: 22,7%*

*Toys in Galician: 0,6% Toys in Spanish: 99,4%*

*Court sentences in Galician: 5% Court sentences in Spanish: 95%*

*Galician TV channels: 4% Spanish TV Channels: 96%*

*Galician Primary-school teaching in Galician cities: 8%*

*Spanish Primary-school teaching in Galician cities: 92%"*

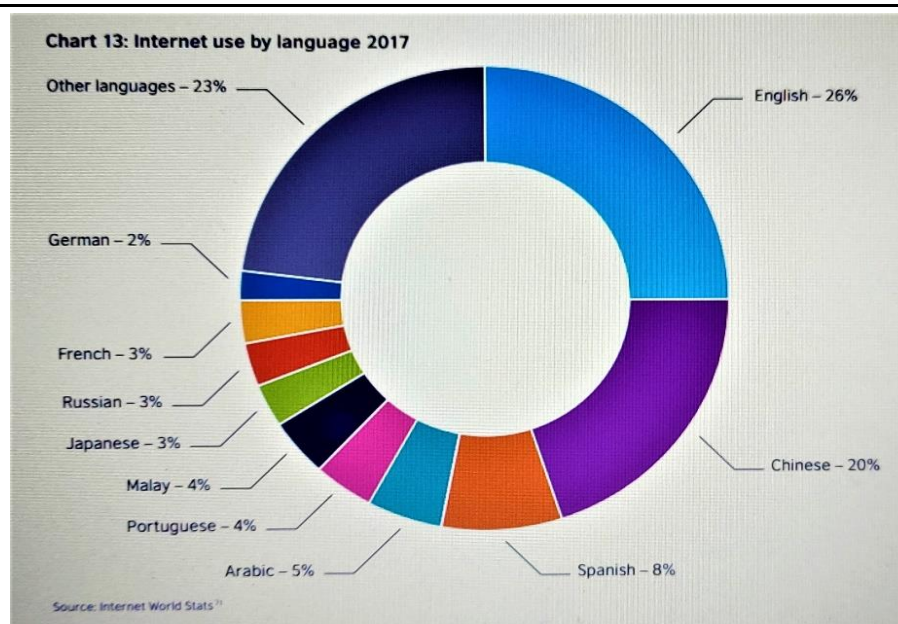
Consumer goods in Galician businesses such as shops, supermarkets are seldom written in Galician. Thus, Galician customers buy products in Spanish or Portuguese, often produced by multinationals including Nestlé, Unilever, Apple, made in China, or EU products which use multilingual descriptions. (Maragoto, Nós Televisión, 2019): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEo9CHdM6IA>.

Young Galicians growing up with the Internet and a global world with languages like Spanish, English and other major languages being all-pervasive for virtual communication, digital media, social networks, audio-visual didactic materials (from pre-school to higher education) effortlessly available over and above those in minority languages such as Galician. Consequently, the Internet and Globalisation are playing a part in the weakening of Galician because the fast paced-changes, movement of people and information flows are not accompanied by language adaptability nor the mediums or practical tools to process them.

In a report commissioned by the British Council (2013), the top 10 world languages (excluding English) and their Internet use (including English), produced the results below:



1	Spanish
2	Arabic
3	French
4	Mandarin Chinese
5	German
6	Portuguese
7	Italian
8=	Russian
8=	Turkish
10	Japanese



**Figure 9:** Adapted from British Council report ‘Languages for the Future’.  
<https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/languages-for-the-future-report.pdf>

Observing all indications, facts and literary data presented on the study, and because it is inevitable that a significant number of languages are likely to be no longer spoken within the next century (Nettle & Romaine, 2000) the prognosis of Galician is crepuscular. For future generations of ‘Galegofalantes’ (Galician speakers) the situation looks even more precarious:

*“Após décadas a ouvir a música celestial do bilinguismo harmónico, nas regions mais povoadas da Galiza falar normalmente em galego é quase impossível para um menino ou umha menina, e para uma pessoa adolescente pode ser um exercício de risco. Mui provavelmente, será convertido em alvo de microagressions, às vezes disfarçado de piada.”* (Rodríguez Carnota, 2018).

*“After decades of listening to the heavenly music of harmonious bilingualism, in the most populated regions of Galicia speaking normally in Galician is almost impossible for a little boy or girl, and for a teenager it can be a risky exercise. Most likely, it will be turned into a target of microaggressions, sometimes disguised as a joke.”*

If not reversed, what Skutnabb-Kangas (2000: 314) describes as: one of the many strategies of ‘invisibilising’ linguistic genocide where it is mainly researchers who are the culprits, when results of linguistic genocide (not only those resulting from education, but in general) start showing and languages ‘disappear’, this can be made to seem ‘natural’, or ‘voluntary shift’, or ‘inevitable’ —therefore, agentless. (...‘The small dialects must be lost... they must give way before the stronger and more developed... The language of Ambon is disappearing at an increasing rate... It is sensible not to oppose such a gradual, natural process’ [...]), (Skutnabb-Kangas).



There is nobody to blame, except the people who left their language. Calling linguistic genocide 'language death' is one way of making the genocide invisible, (Moreira, 2011), and Galician may reach that stage within less than a century.

### Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interests.

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